

Newmont gets tough council submissions

Hauraki District Council has sent a submission to Newmont Waihi Gold on possible outcomes for the proposed Correnso development.

The council said Waihi Gold has no obligation under law to buy houses or compensate owners for loss of property values.

The loss of property value is because of the perception that the area is somehow 'contaminated' by mining rather than because of actual physical effects.

Any actual physical effects of the proposed mine will be dealt with under the resource consent process and that process cannot impose conditions relating to property values.

Council said property values have dropped because of the financial recession but in the past overall values in Waihi have held up well in comparison with other small towns probably because of the economic activity generated by mining in Waihi.

Council said however, as far as it is aware there have been no sales in the east end of Waihi since the Correnso announcement.

Valuers are reluctant to put any values on properties without sales and this covers the whole of the eastern area of the town not just the houses over the proposed mine (Correnso).

Council believes property values and the ability to sell are the major concern of residents in the effected area.

Some people feel trapped when they would like the opportunity to be able to sell within the next few years. They feel they have been robbed of their assets by the company.

Council's submission said the gold mining company has a moral obligation to do something.

The company wishes to continue mining in the area and will most likely apply for further consents in the future.

Council is aware that Newmont uses Waihi as an example of environmental excellence and good practice in community relations.

The company wishes to continue its good relationship with the people of Waihi.

Therefore, Council believe any property policy offered by Newmont Waihi Gold should contain the following elements within the total budget.

■ **Purchase of properties within close proximity to the mine where people wish to sell.**

■ **Cash or kind compensation for properties close to the mine area to raise values of properties.**

■ **General improvements to the neighbourhood.**

■ **An ongoing sum to form a fund where people from the mine affected areas, whose health and wellbeing are affect by not being able to sell their property can be compensated. They can apply to this fund on hardship grounds. This fund to be administered by an independent group. Details of the scheme could be worked out and agreed between the company and the council.**

■ **Such a policy should be developed and announced as soon as possible as the uncertainty of the situation is putting real stress on some residents.**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Deplorable noise

It is past 7pm and I have been told by Donna Fisher that "you have been notified" by Newmont that they need to operate in their open pit mine until 9pm because of "emergency conditions".

Under what consent conditions are they allowed to operate to such a noisy level into our evenings?? Why have they been given this permission?

Why are they allowed these emergency conditions? This is deplorable, Mark. The noise is ridiculous and this is certainly not a good time for the community to have to deal with this invasion.

I wish it to stop as of tonight and go back to the 7pm consent limit at the least.

How do I ensure this is done?

JAUN FISHER

Response from Hauraki District Council

Hours of work in the Martha Mine are governed by clause 3.7 of the land use consent. subclause (d) of that condition states:

"The above hours of work to apply provided that operations in (b) and (c) above are only permitted between 1900 and 2100 hours, Monday to Friday, if the operations are of an urgent nature and necessary for the effective carrying out of mining operations and they comply with the noise level criteria as specified in condition 3.8(b)."

The above condition mirrors condition 19(d) of Mining Licence 32-2388. That condition in turn has its origins in the report and recommendation of the Planning Tribunal Decision No. A48/87. For your information I attach pages 1, 87 and 88 of that Decision.

In my opinion and those of the council's environmental and legal advisers, Newmont Waihi Gold (NWG) is operating within the terms of Condition 3.7(d). The company has invoked the condition because of the severe impact on mining operations where it is unable to keep a working area for the stock pile. In that event operations would have to be considerably curtailed as a

greater volume of ore is being delivered than the crushers can process.

The council is working closely with NWG to implement further measures to address noise issues arising from these extended hours of operation. Such measures include the following:

■ Extending the noise bund. The extension and the outside of the stock pile will be hydro-seeded

■ Shrouding the transfer station and putting "conveyor" curtains in front of the crusher

■ Installing dampners and new exhaust systems on plant.

The council is continuing to monitor what is happening at the pit. I will keep you informed of progress with the above mitigation measures.

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Council